

# Professor Gary Smith Retires After 50 Years at WSU



*Dr. Gary Smith*

After teaching in the Illinois public schools and college-level classes for six years, Gary R. Smith completed his Ph.D. at Northwestern University and joined the College of Education faculty at Wayne State University (WSU) in September 1960 as an assistant professor. This was a time when a computer

was comprised of dozens of cabinets of vacuum tubes and often utilized user-unfriendly languages for communication. During the past 50 years, Professor Smith's teaching and research activities have concentrated on exploring the uses of computers and new technology in support of teachers, especially in the metropolitan Detroit area.

When asked about his years in academia, Dr. Smith

reflected upon three of his research initiatives. One of his early contributions was to use Wayne State's IBM 650 computer, located on the fourth floor of the Old Main building, to write a computer program that defined a school curriculum based upon pupil achievement data and a probability decision model. This program was described in his article published in the *Elementary School Journal* in January 1963.

A second contribution by Professor Smith occurred from his studies of the employment of Michigan teachers and administrators. In collaboration with Cheryl Dove, one of his doctoral students at the time, he used a public domain database of all teachers and administrators employed in Michigan public schools during 1973-1974. The results of that study revealed significant inequities in compensation and promotion to higher administrative ranks when comparing professionally-qualified females versus male employees. This report was published in ERIC ED116356. As a result of their work, action was taken and a later follow-up study by Smith and Dove confirmed that significant progress had been made in

diminishing these inequities, as reported in *Secondary Education Today*, summer 1991.

A third contribution cited by Professor Smith was his funded research project to introduce new computers and technology in selected Detroit Public Schools (DPS) during 1999-2001. This report included six QuickTime video clips in which students and teachers described their personal career goals and their expectations for their future uses of technology. These interviews were recorded by the DPS videographer, James Penny (published in ERIC ED505441).

Dr. Smith remarked that "these research efforts helped to discover new knowledge in the field and suggest the potential benefit of sharing information." In addition to his groundbreaking research efforts, Dr. Smith was an important member of the College of Education faculty who was involved in many divisional and college activities over his 50-year career at WSU, especially the work on the college's National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) re-accreditation in the 1980s. ■